

why that is. Giving tax breaks to the wealthy might make for a happy Christmas at Mar-a-Lago but not for the rest of the country.

The real test is not whether we put votes on the board—and that is the bottom line in the Senate—but whether the center will hold, whether or not we have a strong enough center in the Senate dedicated to responsible investment and infrastructure and can overcome the forces outside.

Former President Trump has been making all these speeches about how bad it is to have an infrastructure program. Well, I would just like to remind the former President: He had no infrastructure program. Talked big. Delivered nothing. Now, we have a chance under President Biden to have one that is bipartisan in nature and truly will help this economy and this country over the long run.

In addition, I believe that we have to move further—and we certainly will with the budget resolution—in investing in America. The notion of having childcare—quality childcare—available and affordable to families is something that, unless you are a grandparent or a parent and know the reality, you may overlook and shouldn't. It is a critical factor in family welfare and good outcomes for children.

In addition, 2 extra years of education beyond the 12th grade, provided by our quality community colleges across America, is the ticket for better jobs and better training and better workers in the 21st century.

As we stand here, our major challenge, I suppose—our nemesis, foe—is China. Some of us can remember something called ping-pong diplomacy, which occurred roughly when I came out of college. That was opening up what we called “Red China” then to the world and giving them an opportunity to compete and to be part of the world conversation, and it happened dramatically.

I remember visiting China several times and the first time, watching them in their Mao jackets on their bicycles, taking their kids to school. What I found in later visits was a really developed economy. The Chinese have a plan. They are mercantilists first, and they are marketing around the world successfully—successfully—because they have a plan. We don't have a plan, not until this President arrived.

President Joe Biden has started this plan by saying: First, we invest in our people and make certain that their lives are easier and successful. I support him completely in that effort. I hope many will. It should be bipartisan. If we have sympathy for the wealthiest in our country, I beg my Republican friends: Have some sympathy for the middle-income families, who are struggling every day to get by.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

INVESTING IN A NEW VISION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND SURFACE TRANSPORTATION IN AMERICA ACT—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3684, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3684) to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer (for Sinema) Amendment No. 2137, in the nature of a substitute.

Carper/Capito Amendment No. 2131 (to Amendment No. 2137), to strike a definition. Carper Amendment No. 2633, to change the enactment date.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Delaware.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, we just heard from the senior Senator from Illinois. I remember when he was a junior Congressman from Illinois, elected in 1982, along with about 80 other Democrats and Republicans from all over the country. One of them was me. One of them was me. And he has been a colleague off and on. I left the House to become the Governor of Delaware, and he came over to the U.S. Senate, and now, we get to work together again.

He is a smart guy, a very bright guy, and a very caring person and very good at not just working with Democrats but working across the aisle. I admired that about him in the House, and I admire that about him in the Senate.

He is passionate about a lot of things, but one of those is an important one, immigration reform. And immigration reform may seem like it is far afield from what we are talking about here today, but for the 8 years I was privileged to be the Governor of Delaware, it was a good economy—Bill Clinton was the President—and it was a good economy for the country. More jobs were created in Delaware in those 8 years than in any 8 years in Delaware's history. As Governor, I didn't create one of them, but we did see a lot of job creation and economic growth, and I was the beneficiary of that, as were other people in my State and around the country.

One of the reasons why I believe that comprehensive immigration reform is something we should have done and ought to do is not just because we are reminded on Sunday afternoon of Matthew 25—when I was a stranger in your land, you welcomed me—but also, it makes good business sense. One of the

keys to economic growth, whether it is my State or the State of New Mexico, where the Presiding Officer is from, one of the keys is the workforce, having people who are either already trained or trainable and able and willing to do the work that needs to be done.

We have a little bit of a mismatch right now in our economy with respect to the skills that a lot of folks who are without jobs would like to be having; they would like to have a job or maybe a better job. There is a mismatch in what employers are looking for and what a lot of workers bring to the workplace. A big part of what we have done in these legislative packages—I call them cares packages—in the last year or 2 is to provide money for workforce development and redevelopment to better equip people with the tools that they need.

H.R. 3684

Mr. President, the reason why I mention these things—comprehensive immigration reform, workforce training, retraining—is those are important ingredients to get our economy and to keep our economy moving. Our economy is moving in the right direction now, but we have to keep it going.

When I was privileged to be Governor of the First State, we built a highway. I took the handoff from Republican Governor Mike Castle, and we built a highway all the way from I-95, in the northern part of our State, down past Dover, past the Dover Air Force Base, all the way to our beaches. Dover has, I think, more five-star beaches than any State in America, I am told, and it is a significant part of our economy, our tourist economy. And, just as tourism is an important component, I think, in the economies of most of ours, we found that, for folks to be able to get to our beaches, they needed to have roads, highways, and bridges.

We built State Route 1—a limited highway—from one end of the State almost to the other. We took I-495, which basically circles the city of Wilmington, and essentially shut it down and resurfaced it. We resurfaced I-95 from Wilmington all the way up to the Pennsylvania line.

We did a lot of things that were designed not just to help the people of Delaware get where they needed to go, wanted to go, and move products, but also to help interstate commerce, and that is a key ingredient for those serious about growing the economy of our country. We have got to invest in our roads, highways, bridges, and in our rail.

As it turns out, I came down here today on a train, as I do many days. God willing, I will go home tonight on a train. It is an Amtrak train.

Interestingly enough, if you were to take a ton of freight and move it from, we will say, Washington, DC, to Boston, you can do it on about a gallon of diesel fuel. Think about that—a ton of freight from Washington, DC, to Boston, MA, on about a gallon of diesel fuel.